# Unconventional Constructions in Multilingual Communication:
## A Construction Grammar Perspective

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Regardless of varying definitions across theoretical frameworks (e.g., Cognitive Linguistics, Construction Grammar) in linguistics, constructions refer to conventional multi-word units with their own form and meaning and their meaning cannot be predicted from the general rules of syntax, semantics and pragmatics (e.g., Croft, 2022; Croft & Cruse, 2004; Goldberg, 2006, Langacker, 1995). Most definitions assume conventionality and fixedness in at least one item (e.g., morphemes, words but also word order) as the common aspects of constructions which may vary in terms of flexibility in their form. In that sense, a multi-word expression (MWE) in the UD framework is a type of construction whose elements are fixed.

There are millions of speakers around the world who speak more than one language (Doğruöz et al, 2021). It is common for these speakers to mix their languages which is observable at the surface level as (e.g., code-switched words/phrases and/or morphemes across languages). In addition to the surface level features, languages in multilingual contexts also influence each other at the underlying levels which are more subtle and harder to detect without any switches at the surface level. However, these subtle cues serve as signals to detect linguistic backgrounds of the speakers, their language abilities as well as the sociolinguistic factors in the given context. The goal of our research is to identify and classify these underlying levels in multilingual contexts through constructions which vary in terms of form, meaning and level of fixedness.

For example, [take N_vehicle] is a common construction in many European languages (e.g. English, Dutch) with a meaning referring to traveling from one place to the other (e.g.,"take a train", "take a bus"). However, the same construction has a different meaning in Turkish where N can only denote a tangible object that can be picked by hand and/or purchased (e.g., "take an apple"). That is why, [tren almak] "train take" construction in Example (1) sounds unconventional for native Turkish speakers (from Turkey) since they would use "tren-e binmek" [train-DAT get.on] construction instead.

**Example (1)**

Bugün 08.15'te  [tren  al-dı-m].
Today  08.15-loc  train take-past-1sg.
"I took the train at 08.15 today"

Similar constructions are commonly observed in the language use of heritage speakers who grow up bilingually. These constructions sound unconventional for native speakers since they are literally translated from another language (e.g., Doğruöz & Backus, 2009; Doğruöz & Nakov, 2014). To the best of our knowledge, this type of meaning transfer through unconventional constructions in multilingual contexts is currently not covered and/or annotated within the UD framework (De Marneffe et al, 2021).

Constructions denoting grammatical relations (e.g., case marking) could be transferred across languages in multilingual settings. For example, [N_vehicle N_location] construction refers to a location (e.g., station) where the passengers take a vehicle (e.g., bus, train) with the purpose of traveling from one place to the other through public transportation in European languages (e.g., English, Dutch). A similar construction also exists in Turkish, but example (2) still sounds unconventional for Turkish speakers (from Turkey) since they would have instead used [N_vehicle N_location_GEN] construction (as in example 3) where case marking (i.e., the genitive suffix) is a fixed part of this construction. (Note that dative case marker is not a fixed feature of [N_vehicle N_location_GEN] construction in Turkish. Instead, dative marker is part of the [N_DAT go] construction where N refers to the [N_vehicle N_location_GEN] construction).

**Example (2)**

[Tren  istasyon-a]     git-ti-m.
Train   station-dat.    go-past-1sg.
"(I) went to the train station"

**Example (3)**
[Tren  istasyon-u-na]    git-ti-m.
Train   station-gen.-dat. go-past.1sg.
"(I) went to the train station"

There is prior research in linguistics about the analyses of unconventional constructions used by bilingual heritage speakers (e.g., Doğruöz & Backus, 2009).  However, it has not been aligned with the UD framework yet. Current research aims at **1)** identifying the unconventional constructions produced in a second language learning context and **2)** classifying them based on their levels of fixedness with the goal of developing a construction-based annotation scheme which could be integrated into the UD framework. The classification of unconventional constructions is still in progress, but the initial results will be presented during the general meeting.

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